

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Cowper.*



AN ARGUMENT.

NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW.

BY THE REV. T. S. MILLINGTON, AUTHOR OF "BOY AND MAN,"
"LOMBARDY COURT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.—PROGRESS.

All daring dust and ashes! Only you,
Of all interpreters, read nature true.

—*Crashaw.*

IN order to carry out more effectually his resolve to think no more of Eva Chamberlain, since he

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found it difficult, after all, to think as much evil of her as he would have wished, or to revive the prejudices of earlier days, Michael Brownlow devoted himself with redoubled energy to the cultivation of his farm. He had entered upon it with confidence, and had expended all the money he could command in the purchase of implements which had come under his notice at recent exhibitions. The extent of land which he was to farm was hardly sufficient to justify such an outlay, nor the quality of it such as to

PRICE ONE PENNY.

promise a large return for the capital involved. But Michael had formed a grand idea of the effects to be produced by new methods, partly of his own invention. He had, or thought he had, a chemical knowledge of the constituent parts of the crops he intended to grow, and fancied that by analysing the soil he could ascertain to a nicety the exact kind and quality of the manures required to bring them to perfection. It was as plain as A B C, he used to say, if not as easy. Put the right ingredients together in the right place, and the right thing would be produced. He meant to show the farmers of the neighbourhood what could be done with the aid of science. His own father, though one of the most intelligent and successful of all, did not pretend to be scientific; and Michael, with all his respect and affection for him, intended to bring in very superior methods, and to ensure very superior results.

The season had been favourable for getting in the corn; but the land was in a bad state and required a great deal of cleaning; and the labourers, not being used to the new machinery, wanted constant and repeated instruction; or if they did not want it, were obliged to submit to it, and got on but slowly, as unwilling pupils generally do. Nevertheless the autumn sowing was completed in good time; and in due season the crops began to appear above ground, looking fairly well.

"Yes," said Mr. Brownlow, as he walked over the ground one day with his son—"Yes; it looks tolerably strong; but it is rather thin."

"I like it thin," Michael answered; "it will fill out afterwards, and be all the better."

"It's too thin, though," said his father; "especially on yonder five-acre field."

"That bit does not look so well," said Michael, "I admit."

"The seed was not first-rate," his father answered. "I told you so at the time."

"I don't mind about that," said Michael. "I dressed it with the elements which were wanting in it, and it ought then to have been equal to the best."

"You can't make good seed out of bad," said his father.

Michael was not so sure of that. He had ascertained by chemical analysis the elements of which a grain of corn ought to consist, and fancied that if these were artificially put together like a medical prescription, they might almost be expected to germinate. He believed it possible that some day or other science would advance so far as to be able to produce the organisation without which all such arrangements of parts are but a lifeless jumble, forgetting that this was the work of the Creator, "in the day when the Lord made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself." It is true, indeed, that matter is, to an almost unlimited extent, under man's control, for it is given him to subdue the earth, but he has no power to imitate even the lowest form of organic life; he cannot fashion the coarsest weed, nor make even one of his own hairs black or white.

Michael resolved that he would not trust to his own judgment in the choice of seed another time, but depend rather upon those who had had more experience with it.

The spring was trying, being very wet and cold,

with east winds, a long period of drought following. Michael watched his crops, and began to fear that they would not turn out as well as he had expected. Up to a certain point they had, as a rule, done famously, but now the blade was turning yellow, and the rows, instead of filling up where the seed had been scantily sown, seemed to grow thinner. His father, going again with him over the land, observed how weak the crops were looking, and hoped they might soon have some nice warm rain to refresh them.

"Yes," said Michael, "that's what we want; the land up here is so exposed to the wind and sun, it soon gets parched."

"True," said the old man; "science is good in its way, but we can't do without the rain and the sunshine which God sends us."

"There are some men," Michael remarked—"and clever fellows, too—who think that a method may be discovered by which rain may be produced when wanted."

"Such fellows as your German doctor, I suppose?"

"No, I don't think anything of him; he only imitated badly what he had seen well done elsewhere. The changes of weather depend very much upon electricity, and we are getting to know more about that every day. It may be possible, in spite of Dr. Kaltmann's failures, to attract the clouds and cause them to discharge themselves, or to drive them away from any particular neighbourhood, as need may be. No one can say where we shall stop."

"So it appears," Mr. Brownlow answered, impatiently; "but it seems to me there is a great deal of presumption in your ideas. The Lord 'giveth the rain, both the former and the latter in his season.' You had better leave that in His hands. If we want rain we can ask Him for it; He will send it in His own time, and that is the best time. How are you to attract the clouds unless He makes them first to be attracted? I don't suppose your science would ever aim at doing that: though there's no knowing! Then, again, you might not be able to control the clouds when attracted. You might have a water-spout that would wash your seed out of the ground when you wanted a gentle shower. 'He maketh small the drops of rain.' Man, with all his science, would find it hard to accomplish that. And even if you should succeed, there would be still worse confusion; for one clever fellow would bring the rain while another wanted fair weather, and neighbours would be for ever quarrelling and going to law about it. We farmers often need rain in one field and sunshine in another, according to the nature of the crops. Depend upon it, He who keeps these things in His own hands knows what is best for us, and will give them according to our need. I am not afraid that science will ever succeed in ruling the clouds, but it would be an evil day for us if it were to happen."

"There's no harm, though, in making use of such knowledge as we possess," said Michael.

"No harm, whatever. It is the right thing to do as long as you remember where all knowledge comes from. Science ought to be the handmaid of religion, and I sometimes fear that you are disposed to put it in the place of religion. Beware of that, Michael. Think of what David says: 'The heavens, the work of Thy hands; the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; the earth full of Thy riches!' The dumb beasts confess this, and we should do

no less. 'These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season.' I would rather be as the beasts of the field, and take what my Maker provides, in ignorant dependence on His bounty, than the most enlightened scientific man that ever lived, trusting to my own wisdom and without God in the world!"

"Right enough, father. It's wonderful, though, what science can do. I should not be surprised if we were to change night into day by-and-by. Instead of leaving our work at sunset, in busy times we may have an electric light, shining like another sun over the fields, and enabling us to go on with our harvesting or ploughing or other occupation without any interruption."

"And how long would that last, Michael?"

"How long? I don't understand you."

"Do you think we could do without rest? Was there not true mercy in the appointment of day and night? What says David?—'Thou makest darkness, and it is night. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all.' If man had the ordering of these matters he would have reserved but a short time for rest. Work is required of us all as the punishment of sin; but God's judgments are not without mercy, and He who gives us our daily task takes care that it shall not be too great for us. Now if you were to turn night into day, men would go on working or pleasuring, perhaps, till they were worn out. Just see how it is with the Sabbath. The seventh day's rest is commanded quite as positively as the six days' work; but because there is no darkness or other physical cause to render it compulsory, see how men disregard it. It is clear that if God had not appointed a day of rest, men would never have done so. They appoint days for pleasuring, which is often a great deal more toilsome and tiring than work, but they don't ordain days of rest. Let us keep our Sabbaths, Michael, and our nights also. Don't let us make our labour-burden heavier for ourselves than God has made it for us."

"Well, but," said Michael, "one thing is to be taken with another, and if the day were longer we might not have to work so hard in it. Machinery saves us a great deal of labour; and there is no knowing how far this may be carried. Labour will one day be reduced to a minimum. Machinery of some sort will do nearly all our work for us. We shall have it not only in our fields and factories, but in our houses. There will be nothing to do but touch a spring and all will go on without any trouble. So some men think. Then again, if we could get rid, once for all, of the weeds and refuse of our land, it would not require so much cleaning and scuffling. Every poison has its antidote, and our chemists may find out a method of dressing the earth which will annihilate every plant and seed that is useless and unprofitable, and spare the rest, and so leave the land permanently clear for our crops."

"Wheat without tares, Michael? Barley without cockles? Do you seriously think that that will ever come to pass? Well, yes; it may, in that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. God may do it, but man—never! Why, sir, who is it that said, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'? No, no! you will never

purge the earth of its thorns and its thistles till you have got rid of the cause of them; and you will never do without labour till you can do without bread. Science may help us to provide for our increasing wants as population increases; the knowledge of God's laws may help us to do our work more sensibly and effectually, and to make the earth more productive; but if we expect more than that from it, we put it in God's stead, and it will be a curse to us and not a blessing."

With such arguments the worthy farmer tried to moderate the ardent, not to say arrogant, expectations of his son, and to combat the unsound ideas with which he had become imbued in studying science apart from religion. He was fearful of saying too much, lest Michael should be led to argue for arguing's sake. When a man does that he will espouse even a bad cause with more earnestness than judgment, for

"He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still."

CHAPTER XXX.—FROM THE HEART.

The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to avenge an injury.

—Lady E. Carew.

ALTHOUGH the winter had been severe, and the spring, as we have seen, cold and wet, yet Mrs. Brownlow, to her great surprise and pleasure, observed that her daughter Lizzie did not appear to suffer from it as she had anticipated. She was in fact more free from cold and cough than she had been for years past at that season. This was due probably to the position of the house, which, though exposed on three sides to the wind, was sheltered on the east by a coppice of pine-trees, the smell of which was both pleasant and wholesome. It was also high and dry. The fogs from Rushy Pastures and other low-lying parts did not rise to it, and on this account, although its occupants were sometimes almost snowed up, the frosts were less injurious to them. Their outdoor shrubs and plants survived when those in lower situations were cut off, and indoors also they did not feel the cold so much as their neighbours. It was "an eager and a nipping" air, to be sure, but it did not set them shivering; it produced a healthy reaction of the system, and made their cheeks glow without reaching to their bones.

"Who would ever have thought it?" Mrs. Brownlow said to her husband, after they had been several months in their new home;—"Lizzie seems like a new creature. Last winter she was shut up in the house for weeks together, one cold after another; and all the summer she was weak and languid; and then she had that troublesome illness, so that I hardly dared bring her here; yet now she goes out every day, and has scarcely ever missed a Sunday at church, though it is so far off. It will be a lesson to me not to mistrust Providence. More than half the sorrow and anxiety I felt at leaving the Goshen was on Lizzie's account, and instead of being worse for it, she is, as everybody must confess, very much the better. I begin to think Mr. Chamberlain has done us a service instead of an injury by bringing us here."

"If he has, he did not mean it," Mr. Brownlow answered.

"Never mind that. He did not wish us any harm. If he could have had a house and farm such

as he wanted without taking ours he would have preferred leaving us undisturbed, I have no doubt. I dare say he, and Mrs. Chamberlain also, would rejoice to hear that Lizzie is no worse, but rather better for the change."

"Perhaps they might," said Brownlow, who, with all his charity, did not relish the idea of Mr. Chamberlain's rejoicing. "No thanks to them, all the same. I have forgiven them, of course; but still I can't forget what a cruel thing it was, or might have been, all events."

"I could not help thinking, though," said Mrs. Brownlow, "as Lizzie and I were sorting those tiles which Mrs. Chamberlain sent up here when she had stripped the hearth of them, because she knew we liked them, though she didn't, and looking at the history of Joseph, and that picture where he is reconciled to his brethren—I could not help thinking, I say, of his words, 'Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. . . . it was not you that sent me hither, but God.' It seemed so like what we might say to the Chamberlains. It was not they who sent us here, and we ought not to be angry with them. It was God's providence ordered it, to save our Lizzie. At the Goshen she was always ailing; and there, John dear, we lost our own dear little Joseph and his baby sister."

"That was not the fault of the place," said Brownlow; "I don't see how it could be."

"We did not think so at the time, but it might have been."

"Well, I don't feel any grudge towards Chamberlain, as you know, and he knows it, and everybody else knows it."

Mrs. Brownlow was silent for a few moments, and then said, "John, dear, don't be vexed with me for what I am going to say; but are you sure, quite sure, that you have no unfriendly feelings left towards Mr. Chamberlain?"

"Yes, of course I am. I think I have shown that plainly enough."

"Too plainly, perhaps."

"How can that be?"

"Why, you see, John, to tell a man repeatedly that you forgive him, is like reminding him that he has injured you."

"I don't remind him of it. I never mention the subject."

"But your manner towards him seems to signify as much."

"Why? Because I am civil to him?"

"Not that exactly. But I think sometimes you are more anxious to be civil now than you were before anything of this sort happened. And that makes people talk."

"I can't help it if people talk. I had rather people should say I am his friend than his enemy. If I were to avoid him they might think I had a spite against him."

"As it is, the neighbours draw comparisons between you and him; they say how well you behave to him and how much he must feel it."

"I don't want them to say that about me; but as for Chamberlain, he ought to feel it; it is right that he should feel it; it will do him good to feel it."

"And you wish him to feel it?"

"Yes, I do."

"If it is painful to him? if it provokes him? if it mortifies him?"

"He has only himself to thank for that. When

a man does wrong he must expect to suffer in some way. It is a very mild sort of punishment for him to know that I forgive him. If that hurts him I can't help it."

Michael, who had entered the room while this conversation was going on, listened with evident pleasure to his father's reply.

"You are too kind to Chamberlain, father," he said, "and too considerate. Most men in your position would be glad of an opportunity of paying him out; but you seem to be always trying to do him a good turn. But never mind. He will have to answer for it some day. He has got Naboth's vineyard, and Naboth's curse will follow."

"Not by my doing," cried his father, holding up his hand; "not if I can prevent it."

"It will, though. You said so yourself, with chapter and verse for it: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' I expect to see it some day. It will be with Chamberlain as it was with Ahab, 'I will requite thee in this plat.'"

"Oh, Michael, don't remind me of that," Mr. Brownlow exclaimed. "I never thought, when I said it, that Chamberlain would really do as he intended. I don't want vengeance; I don't wish to see him requited. Don't think that I entertain such feelings, Michael, pray!"

Michael pursed up his mouth, as much as to say he did not intend to be argued out of his opinions on that subject.

"It sounds very good and Christianlike," he said; "but I can't understand any one forgiving an offence so entirely as not to wish for some sort of rebuke or punishment to follow it. Why, father, you said yourself just now that Chamberlain ought to feel it, and you wished him to feel it. You and I are of one mind about it. It is only a question of degree. We both wish the same thing; only I should like to see the punishment more adequate to the offence."

Mr. Brownlow walked to the window and looked out. He was musing. Michael's remarks had opened to him a depth in his own heart which he had scarcely been aware of. Could it be true that he and his son were instigated by the same feelings, and so nearly of one mind on this question? He could not deny that it had afforded him no little gratification to show kindness to Mr. Chamberlain, and to know that it was observed. It had given him pleasure to perceive that the steward was humiliated and annoyed by his attentions. What, then, had been his motive in thus behaving towards him? Did he do it as an act of Christian kindness according to the spirit of the command, "Love your enemies; do good to them that persecute you"? or was it not rather from a lurking desire to rebuke his adversary, and to gratify his own self-righteousness and pride? Shocked as he felt at Michael's unconcealed desire for retribution, he could not but acknowledge that he had himself been influenced hitherto by similar motives, and that his son was only going a few steps further than himself, and carrying out his own principles to their natural conclusion.

"I'm afraid," he said, presently, turning round—"I'm afraid that I have been to blame—very much to blame. If Mr. Chamberlain has done me an injury—"

"If? Why, of course he has," Michael interrupted, with a snort.

"I am not so sure of that, after all," his father answered.

Mrs. Brownlow looked up, well pleased. She was thinking of Lizzie, and of the history of Joseph and his brethren; but she did not speak. Mr. Brownlow saw her face brighten, and understood what was passing in her mind.

"I am not so sure of that," he repeated. "But if it be so, I should wish to forgive him heartily and freely. 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.' How does God forgive? Not grudgingly, but freely and entirely. And that's what he requires of us. In the punishment of the unmerciful servant we are taught, 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye *from your heart* forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.' *From my*

heart I will forgive my enemies, if I have any. I am afraid I have not done so hitherto; but I must try to mend. And oh, Michael, don't speak again of wanting to be revenged; don't learn such a lesson as that from your father; don't think I want to requite Mr. Chamberlain; and never say another word about Ahab's vineyard. It's my own fault, I fear; but it pains and shocks me."

He stopped, unable to say more. Michael was surprised at his father's emotion, and checked the froward and inconsiderate answer which he was about to make.

"I'm sorry I have vexed you," he said. "I'll try to think as you think, and to feel as you feel."

And with that the conversation ended.

THE RESPECTABLE POOR.

OF late years some progress has been made by the English Local Government Board (or central bureau of Poor Law administration) in the important work of classifying the various divisions of public pauperism. For example, the able-bodied and adult paupers are, at any rate in some of the larger cities, separated wholly from the juveniles, who are either trained in District Schools, or placed in carefully selected cottage homes, under what is termed the Boarding-out System. Much, however, remains to be effected in this direction, so far as the children are concerned, inasmuch as many thousands of them are still located in the same buildings with adult paupers, many of the latter being most undesirable companions, on account of their previously vagrant or drunken lives. *All* pauper children, without exception, should be trained apart from the adults. The incurably diseased and the imbecile paupers are also, in general, placed in separate hospitals or asylums, and thus, in another important category of the poor, the work of classification has been extended.

But it needs a further application in regard to the better separation of the "respectable poor" in workhouses from those whose pauperism is mainly the result of their own previous drunkenness or vice. The latter class are often the lowest dregs of that degraded class whom Mr. Bright describes as "the residuum" of our towns, and whom even he considers to be wholly unfitted for the exercise or possession of a parliamentary suffrage.

Yet such vicious persons, as are many of this description, under existing arrangements, closely associated in workhouses, both by day and night, with a respectable class of men and women who are the pitiable victims of calamities over which they have had no control, and whose previous lives have, in more than a few instances, been marked by some pleasing and praiseworthy features. The late Rev. Dr. Campbell, in alluding to the sad reverses which sickness, death, widowhood, or other unavoidable bereavements sometimes bring upon the virtuous poor, remarks: "To my feelings there is something dreadful in the very thought of an aged Christian female, a member of the body of Christ, being incarcerated in one of those huge receptacles of promiscuous and profligate misery, and cut off from all that is dearest to her upon earth." He speaks similarly as to the painful sight of venerable men "exchanging

the society of the church for the society of the work-house."

Nor is it merely from degraded fellow-paupers in workhouses that the respectable poor suffer. They often undergo much for lack of benevolent visitation in those establishments, and from being committed to very unsuitable nurses. The authoress of a graphic little work, entitled "Sick and in Prison" (London: Bell and Daldy), in describing workhouse, not prison, life, says of the great number of aged women: "In some rooms so many are lying stiff and still in their little beds, all dressed in the blue bed-gown and white cap of the house, many paralysed, all equally helpless and friendless, that the mass of human suffering, the very monotony of it, seems like a nightmare. And yet each of those blue bundles, ticketed and numbered, and tucked away in the workhouse little bed and grey coverlet, is a woman who has lived and loved and suffered long; and, half dead as they are, the gentle touch of a lady's hand and voice, with all the unaccustomed kindness, wakes them to a feeling of pleasure and also of protection which they only know during those brief visits." The authoress then describes in detail painful workhouse scenes, such as "dying women asking help of the nurse, who only swears at them for waking her." It is added that "It is quite a common occurrence, in the wards of a workhouse infirmary, to see women, whose fit place would be a penitentiary, holding absolute authority over younger women of good character and better education, and, perhaps still more often, over older women, many of whom have been respectable wives and mothers."

But it is very difficult for the Poor Law authorities to secure effectual classification in the workhouses, how desirable soever it may be. For whilst it is comparatively easy for them to separate the child from the adult, or the idiot and the diseased from the pauper who is healthy in body or mind, it would be an arduous task to pronounce upon the moral merits or respectability of the paupers assembled under one common roof. This work of classification must at any rate involve some assistance from the voluntary efforts of benevolent persons in each district. Perhaps it might be practicable to permit paupers in poorhouses to receive certain comforts, or special accommodation, on condition of some scale of payment being made by charitable neighbours willing to burden themselves with extra charges for their own

acquaintances amongst the poor, in addition to their share of the rates paid in common with all householders. Something of this kind has been adopted in one or two of the London hospitals, where any person may, for special payment, receive certain privileges of accommodation. And certainly *far more visitation* by benevolent persons ought to be permitted and facilitated by the Guardians.

But the best mode of separating the respectable poor from the "residuum," is to devise measures, as far as possible, for *preventing* their becoming absolute paupers. With this view it is very desirable to diffuse amongst the population more general information on the advantages held out by the Government, through the medium of the post-office, for life insurance, and also for the granting of deferred annuities for old age. Thousands of families have been suddenly reduced to pauperism by the death of parents who could have easily made a good provision for their wants by means of life assurances, but who have culpably neglected to do so. Yet a considerable sum may be insured on very easy terms. For example, a young father, aged 30, may, by an annual payment to the post-office of £2 6s. 7d., insure his life for £100. Even if he died the day after the first payment, his family would receive the whole sum of £100; nearly £500 could be insured, at age 30, for a ten-pound note paid annually thenceforth till death. Many a man who cannot easily save £50 can readily pay from £2 to £10 per annum for insurance, and thus secure a large amount of saving for his family. In a still easier way, a person aged 30 may, by the payment of only two shillings a month, secure £46 at death, whenever it may happen.

But insurers may secure profits during their own lives also in a similar way. For small sums, paid monthly or yearly, deferred annuities may be secured for all the later years of life. Thus, a young man of the age of 30 may, for a payment of 8s. a month through the post-office, purchase an annuity of £21 a year, or 8s. per week, for the remainder of his life on attaining the age of 60. And this amount will be gained for him on the best of security—that of the British Government. Insurances of from £20 to £100 at death may also be secured through the post-office by single payments, once for all, of from £7 to £35. Deferred annuities may also be provided for by single payments of so much for each £1 of annuity. But a still further improvement in this direction is desirable. Many, or most, poor persons cannot raise sums of from £7 to £35 for single payments. But they could often deposit single sums of 10s. or £1.

Therefore, what is needed is that, both in the post-office insurances and also in private offices, there should be some fixed and certain amount capable of insurance for every £1 paid in. By this it is meant that a poor man, on making a payment of £1, should be able to reflect, "I have now secured for life some absolute benefit for myself or for my family, which no future poverty or forgetfulness on my part can interfere with. I have insured for that £1 a positive and certain fractional sum, to be paid hereafter by the office either at my death, or during my life, in the form of a deferred annuity."

This is the great desideratum of insurance. An absolutely certain return (irrespective of any future or further payment by the insurer) of some fixed portion of every £1 paid in:

For at present the losses, even to the provident, amongst the poorer classes, are enormous. The general public have little or no idea of the vast sums which are annually lost by poor *provident* families in consequence of the *lapsing* of their insurance policies, through temporary or permanent inability to pay the continuing instalments. It is true that many, or most, insurance offices will give a certain payment for a deliberately surrendered policy after it has been in force for from one to three years. But this is not sufficient to prevent vast losses by the insurers, for in many cases the policies lapse through mere forgetfulness, and then no surrendered value can be claimed; and even when surrenders are paid for, the sums allowed are but small.

As an illustration of the losses thus sustained by the provident classes of the community, it may be here mentioned that the secretary of one of the most respectable life insurance offices in London recently made the following statement: "Our office, since the commencement of the company, has issued 17,000 life policies. Of these, 10,000 have wholly lapsed, without any return to the insurers. Of the remaining 7,000, only 4,000 continue to be paid upon. The other 3,000 policies have been surrendered on repayment of the usual 'surrender values,' or fractional portions of the 'amounts paid in premiums.'"

Hence it appears that in this office (one of the best, be it repeated) more than half of the policies have been wholly lost to the insurers. "Insurers," indeed! Poor creatures, what a satire on the word "insure" is afforded by such a loss. The only parties who have thus surely gained have been the proprietors or shareholders of the company. There is here a dead loss of 10,000 policies, and of all the sums paid upon them, and a considerable additional loss (probably of more than half the amounts paid) upon 3,000 other policies which were duly surrendered. It is really sad to reflect upon the pecuniary loss and the disappointed hopes of all these thousands of "insurers." How must such a result lead to encourage future improvidence and recklessness!

And if so great a loss results in a single office, how enormous must be the losses upon the aggregate of policies in all the other offices! The reflection is a most dismal one. It is no wonder that there are frequent complaints of the unthriftiness of the English people as a whole. Nay, rather, it is wonderful that, under such extreme discouragements, the people are so thrifty as they really are.*

Another insurance company, largely connected with the working classes, has publicly announced, in its reports, that within five years upwards of forty per cent. of its policies have lapsed! What a painful tale of wide-spread loss, disappointment, and discouragement is here, again, involved!

* A well-known statistician sends the following note to the writer: "The Government Report of Friendly Societies for 1878 shows that there are 12,133 societies making returns. These give a total of 4,568,173 members. Over two millions of these are associated with societies of whom no hope can be entertained of their fulfilling all the engagements to which they are committed. For not only is the capital accumulated in the early years of many of them being year by year absorbed, but some of the accounts further show that the subscriptions of the younger members are being made use of to pay current liabilities."

"The average assets of all these societies were in the years—
1875, £1, nearly, per member.
1876, 10s. 8½d. " "
1877, 10s. 4d. " "

"The average of management expenses were over forty per cent. of the gross receipts!"
"Further, the Government Returns show that the number of lapsed members of friendly societies alone was (in the year 1877) 147,792."

It would, perhaps, not be an over-estimate to put down the annual losses of "insurers" by lapsed policies as amounting to many hundreds of thousands of pounds—possibly to more than a million.

In reference to the amounts paid by the working classes for insurance, the following is one of the explanations of the lapse of many policies. Some collectors (who, by the way, receive a good poundage or percentage of the collections, and not unreasonably so, in certain cases) pay regular weekly or monthly visits to factories, quarries, or railways, where a number of workers are assembled. The payments of the men there in work are thus easily gathered in. But if a man is ill, and in consequence absent, the collector is not obliged to call upon him individually at his house. It is the insurer's interest to be punctual; otherwise his policy may wholly lapse by a single omission to pay an instalment punctually. If the man recovers and returns to his work, he is again called upon, with the others at

work, and arrangements can then be made for a continuance or renewal of his former policy. But an insurance company is not legally obliged to renew any policy on which a single instalment is in default through unpunctuality. In general, such defaults involve the forfeiture of the whole of the past payments. These lapsed policies form a special and main source of the so-called "profits" of many insurance offices.

It may thus be seen that one of the greatest philanthropic needs of the age is a new system of insurance, especially for the poorer classes, by which for every pound, or even for every five shillings, once paid, there shall be effected an absolute and positively certain amount of fractional future benefit to the insurer, independently of any future contingencies.

Until this indispensable reform is secured, there will be lacking one of the greatest of stimulants to national thrift, and one of the chief preventives of destitution.

W. TALLACK.

FATHER BACH AND FREDERICK THE GREAT.

"BACH, your father's music is truly sublime; it makes a better man of me. When is he coming to see me? Tell him when you write to him again that I admire his works, his noble 'Passions-musik' especially, and would fain see the author and hear him play. Tell him to come soon, for if he does not of his own will, I will send a detachment of hussars to persuade him."

Thus speaking, the king turned and strode away, scarcely heeding the apologies which Emanuel Bach, frightened by the grim humour of Frederick, endeavoured to make for his father. He was still standing where the king had left him when his majesty returned and said, "When you write, say also that I wish to see Friedemann as well. It is my desire to know whether the reports of his skill and genius are true. You need not be alarmed. I believe you have done everything in your power to induce your father to pay me a visit, and that his delay is not to be counted as your fault."

Emanuel bowed and hastened to his lodgings, and wrote to his father at Leipzig. He repeated the conversation he had had with the king, and urged him to lose no time in obeying his command.

The good old man, fearing that his son's worldly position might be endangered, at once suppressed all his former objections, and made preparations for the journey to Potsdam, eager to see his son as much as to obey the king, whose kindly expressions of admiration for his own talents and his son Friedemann's genius had excited gratified feelings in his mind. Friedemann possessed much of his father's ability for music—played the organ, the harpsichord, and the violin with equal facility, and was, moreover, accomplished in many other arts. He was a sound mathematician, an expert linguist, well learned in all that related to the science and history of music, easy and refined in his manners, an enthusiast in his art, but he was said to be deficient in firm principle.

His father, who loved him more than all his other children, excused his errors, deeming his faults to arise from lack of judgment rather than from want of trustworthiness and honesty of mind.

When Emanuel's letter came, Friedemann was living at home, recruiting his health after a severe mental illness. Hastily making ready, they started on their journey, and in due time reached Potsdam, where the king resided. They proceeded to the lodgings of Emanuel, and found he was at the palace as usual in the evening, one portion of his duties being to accompany the king when he chose to play the flute, his favourite instrument. This was a task of no mean difficulty, for his majesty was an indifferent timist, and it needed the exercise of great watchfulness and skill to follow the impulsive changes which were made in the rhythm of the music by the king.

On this evening the concert about to commence was honoured by the presence of some of the princes and princesses of the royal house, for the occasion was one of more than usual importance. Some portions of "Cinna," a new opera by Graun, the court composer and conductor of the band, were to be tried that night previous to the production, in a few days' time, of the whole work.

All was ready; the musicians waited for the signal from the king to commence. As the palace clock struck nine, a roll of drums was heard. The officer on duty, according to custom, entered and presented the report for the day, which contained, among other matters, a list of the names of all those who had passed the gates of Potsdam during the day, with a description of their dignities, their business, the purpose of their visit, and a statement of the time of their intended stay. The perusal of the list was ordinarily a mere formal matter. The king, with his flute in hand, glanced over the names, when suddenly he started, laid down the instrument, and, turning to the musicians, said, in a delighted tone, "Gentlemen, old Bach is here!"

Emanuel, seated at the piano, could not help exclaiming, half aloud, "My father!" when the impropriety into which he had been betrayed by his emotion covered him with confusion.

"Yes, Bach; your father is here, and with him your brother Friedemann. Your delight is pardon-

able;" saying which the king turned to the officer and said, "Go at once and bring them hither without further loss of time. Let them not wait to change their travelling dress. Gentlemen, the concert is postponed until John Sebastian Bach is present."

Wearied with a long and fatiguing journey, the old musician sat talking with Friedemann, when he received the king's orders to repair at once to the palace. He had intended to rest and refresh himself that night after his journey, and on the morrow proposed to report himself to the king and await his pleasure. He was not a little disturbed, therefore, when the messenger arrived, and, with true military firmness, refused to allow either to change their garments. The king had expressly said that they were to appear in their travelling dress, and his commands must be obeyed. So Friedemann fetched his father's coat, hat, and stick, and all reluctant, nervous, and excited, they started for the palace.

"My dear father," said Friedemann, as the old man began to grumble at being disturbed, "do not forget that it is his majesty's command, and remember that we have left Leipzig for this very purpose."

Sebastian, leaning upon the arm of his son, passed through the beautiful rooms of the palace, saw his own image many times reflected in the looking-glasses on all sides; and his mind was ruffled by the thought of his appearance—the shabby wig he wore, his dilapidated brown coat, woollen stockings, and shoes tied with pack-thread, and all his clothes covered with dust.

The king came forward with hands extended to meet the venerable musician, a smile on his lip and a sparkle of pleasure in his eye. The travel-stained garb of the old man, and his evident embarrassment, contrasted strangely with the elegant courtly costumes of the assembly, and would have excited ridicule, had not the presence of the king, and his courteous and warm reception of the old musician, restrained all mirth.

Friedemann, pale as he was with recent suffering, was more at his ease than his father, for he had been living in kingly courts, and was familiar with the usages of society. The king received him graciously, and expressed a desire to hear him perform some time during his stay in Potsdam.

"You are, I think, acquainted with Silbermann's new forte-pianos, Father Bach?" said the king. "If you are not too tired, I should like to have your opinion of the merits of those I possess."

"As your majesty pleases," answered Bach. "He who loves his art ought never to be weary in exercising it."

"Come, then," said the king, pleased at the reply. "I have waited so long for this meeting that you must pardon me if I seem a little too exacting. The concert is postponed. We will hear the forte-pianos. *Allons, messieurs—allons tous.*" He took Sebastian by the arm, and led the way; the pages and servants carrying lights before them, the entire assemblage following. The king was a great admirer of Silbermann's pianos, and possessed no less than seven, on all of which Bach played, extemporising in a fashion which astonished and delighted his hearers. They returned to the concert-room, Bach having expressed his opinion that the instrument there placed was the best of the series, thus unconsciously confirming the judgment of his son Emanuel, who had selected it as having the finest tone. He now requested the king to give him a subject to extemporise upon—some-

thing which might exercise his powers more than the mere preluding he had been doing. The king, astonished, said, "Well, Bach, if this is your preluding, what do you consider serious exercise? We Berlin musicians must needs be silent after that."

"Not so, your majesty, Berlin has its own kingdom of art in which I could never hope to dwell. I could never aspire to write operas like Graun, for that is a style of art in which I have no skill. However, if it please you to give me a subject for a fugue, I will do my best to work it out." This was done to the admiration of all present. The king, who was no indifferent or unscientific musician, listened with amazement and unfeigned delight, and at the conclusion of the trial, shaking him warmly by the hand, said, "Well done, Bach, the high expectation I had formed of your powers have been far exceeded by your performance this night. The instrument upon which you have played so marvelously shall be touched no more but by your hands alone. Accept it as a souvenir of this evening, and to-morrow I would hear you try some of our best organs in Potsdam. You have given me much food for thought, good Master Bach, and for that I thank you. Gentlemen, no more music to-night. Adieu."

The king's wish was soon made known, and on the morrow all the churches which he proposed to visit were filled with people eager to hear the wondrous old musician. It was a lovely day in April; the sun shone brightly through the new and tender green leaves of the trees, which, as they were disturbed by the soft west wind, appeared to flash forth bright green rays of light. New-born spring flowers modestly poured out their delicate odours on the delighted senses, awakening in the soul of the old musician all gratitude and reverence for the Almighty giver of good.

With his heart full of feelings almost too deep for utterance, the old man was carried in the royal carriage sent for his use to the first of the churches selected for the round.

There, seated in the chancel, were the Queen Dowager, the Princess Ulrica, the Margravine of Beyreuth and her young daughter, while the Prince Henry, and one or two favoured guests of the king, who had been specially summoned from Berlin for this occasion, were grouped around.

The king himself led Bach to the organ, saying, "Now, dear Bach, you can begin."

"May I humbly ask of your majesty that you would give me a theme?" said Sebastian.

"Will you play one on the letters of your own name," said the king, "B, A, C, H? There is no worthier subject."

"Your majesty is too good, but will not my brother musicians, many of whom are doubtless here, and not knowing that the theme has been suggested to me, think that I have selected that to exhibit my own vanity?" said Bach.

"Tut, tut! Father Bach, you are too modest. But I see the force of your objection, though I do not doubt your power. Tell me, can you extemporise a fugue in six parts, say upon this theme?" said the king, running his hands over the keys of the organ. "I will do my best, your majesty," said Bach, and silently breathing a prayer, as was his invariable custom, he prepared to begin.

* The exact date of his visit to the king was April 7th, 1747.

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J. S. Bach.

Frederick, George, Graham, Voltaire,
Queen Dowager, Princess Urtica, Margravine of Bayreuth.

Prince Henry

Friedemann Bach,
Mr. E. Bach.



The king took his seat, but, impelled by the power of the music, soon stood up, approaching gradually nearer to the wondrous old artist, who was pouring forth a stream of melody and harmony such as never had been heard before within those walls. Every soul in the building fancied itself carried away out of earthly thoughts into a blissful dream of heaven. It was a wonderful instance of the power of art to produce feelings mistaken too often for true devotion.

Such was the power of the music that all the listeners seemed to merge their own individuality for a time into that of the mighty musician, and to be impressed only by the thoughts he expressed through the music. His whole soul was in his work; his music came from the heart, and entered into and spoke to all hearts. It was not until long after the music ceased that the spell was broken—not until the final chords had died away into space that any ventured to move, much less to speak. Poor heart-stricken Friedemann, leaning his head against the frame upon which the numbers of the hymns sung on the previous Sunday still remained unaltered, thought of the past passages of his life, and breathed a sigh for his neglected opportunities. His brother Emanuel listened in wonder to the marvellous ingenuity with which his father had treated the difficult theme the king had pitched upon. Even Voltaire, all unable as he was to change the habitual sneer upon his face, was constrained to allow the sneer to shape itself into an expression of interest. Graun bowed his head as if in worship of the mightier genius of his great contemporary. Cocceji, the Grand Chancellor, was an ardent admirer of music; and although his mind was full of proposed reforms of the Prussian administration of justice, he could not but admit how refining was the power of the musician in rousing the soul and stirring men's hearts to think of better things than those which called forth the exercise of his own splendid ability.

The organ ceased; the player still sat on the organ stool, with his hands clasped and his head bowed. Even the king remained standing in the attitude his attention to the music had brought him. Then laying his hand upon the musician's shoulder, he said, "You have given me a holy hour, Bach. None but myself and my Maker will ever know the extent to which your sublime art has moved me. Descend, good friend, and send Friedemann hither. I would hear him play before we leave this place."

The son now occupied the stool the father had vacated. Many of those present doubted the evidence of their own senses while he played. The organ did not seem to give out the sounds of a like character with those produced by the father. Now the hearer was lashed into excitement, now soothed into a calm which was no rest.

The king was disturbed and restless. The unhappy hours of his childhood, the stern conduct of his father, the terrible scenes he had witnessed on the field of battle, all seemed to be brought vividly before his mind as he listened.

Voltaire noted his gleaming eye and compressed lips, and, when the player ceased, as the murmur of smothered amazement rose from the crowd who were listening to the wild and weird, yet enchanting music, he whispered, in his sardonic way, to his pupil and ardent admirer, "Ah, monseigneur, c'est un génie—mais un génie de l'enfer."

The king did not reply, but gave the signal to proceed to the other churches, where he wished to

hear Bach play. When the day was ended he sent for him, and pressed him to resign his appointments at Leipzig, and to enter his service, promising to give him whatever he wished. "Ask what you will, but be with me. I feel that if I could have you near me and about me, that you and your music would make me in time what, I fear, I shall never be without—a decently religious man." "Your majesty, your offer is most noble, most generous, and I would that I could accept it," said Bach. "I am old; I feel I have not many more years to live. My heart is in Leipzig, your majesty; the Thomas School demands all the care I can bestow upon it. My children have been born there; my first dear wife, Friedemann's mother, now an angel in heaven, lies buried there. I am an aged and stricken trunk; my roots are firmly planted in that soil so hallowed to me. Were I removed, I feel I should die. I am no longer young; my sight is failing me; my hands are losing their old cunning. Could your majesty read my heart, you would see there printed my best desire to fulfil your wish, and also that the powers you have honoured me by admiring will soon be mine no more. I entreat you, therefore, sire, to forgive me if I decline your generous offer, and to ask you to let me live kindly in your memory. If your majesty will be good to me, protect my poor Friedemann, my much-loved, my suffering son. He needs support and a powerful helper."

"You are, perhaps, right. Trust to me; I will do what you wish," said the king.

Friedemann soon after received his patent as director of the music and organist of St. Mary's at Halle. The father returned to Leipzig and employed his spare hours in working out the theme which the king had given him. This he dedicated to Frederick under the title of "Das musikalische Opfer." The Musical Offering. The sad forebodings of failing health which he had intimated to the king began to be seriously realised. His eyesight had become weaker with growing years. It was never very strong since the time when, as a boy, he stealthily copied by moonlight the precious manuscript of organ pieces which his churlish brother withheld from him. The weakness developed into distinct disease. He submitted to two operations for his eyes, but he became quite blind. He yielded to his fate with the patience of a well-balanced religious mind. With pious resignation he was wont to say, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." He waited for death with calmness and serenity, his chiefest pleasure being to recall to memory the various passages of Scripture which had become, as it were, embedded in his mind by means of the music he had set to them. He enjoyed the conversation and society of his old friends, and took especial delight in the presence of his children. The one event which disturbed his serenity was the death of his youngest son, a boy about twelve years old, who, though an idiot, possessed the most remarkable faculty of repeating all the music he had heard, and of imitating the peculiarities of the players. All other intellectual powers were denied to the poor boy; music was the only link which showed his connection with reasoning beings.

The old blind father would sit and listen for hours to the wild and extravagant and often original effusions of his dear afflicted child.

His own end drew near; his daughter Frederika, with her husband Altnikol, came to see him, and he

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derived considerable comfort from their presence. He seemed to gather new life while his worthy son-in-law was near him. The "Art of Fugue," the great work of his life as he deemed it, was left incomplete by reason of his blindness. With occasional assistance he had been able so far to get on with it that there remained but one example to finish. Of the sixteen numbers in the work—"Counterpoints," as he called them—one was yet to be written. The attempt was made, but it was a severe and painful one. His mind refused to follow the direction of his desire. His power of originating either a theme or the needful treatment was gone. Exhausted, he lay back upon his pillow, his darkened eyes streaming forth scalding tears. He called his daughter to him and bade her read from his Bible at the first page which opened of itself. As she read his face became calm, and he fell into a gentle and tranquil sleep.

When he awoke he still believed himself to be dreaming, for he could distinctly see his wife and children. His sight had mercifully returned to him. With tears of thankfulness and joy, they all gave praise to the Almighty whose hand had restored the blessing to their loved father and friend.

Altnikol came gladly to see his dear old master, who seemed for a short time to recover his old power of mind with his recovered sight, and at his dictation, not made without much painful effort and suffering, wrote down the theme and fugue* with which he desired to complete his last and great work. The subject was that which had been chosen by the king on the

occasion of his visit to Potsdam some three years before.

"Come, dear mother, and let my poor weak eyes, while sight is left to them, gaze upon your sweet and patient face. Hold my hand. Take the pen, Altnikol, and write."

Then in a low voice he dictated the subjects to Altnikol, who wrote as clearly and as firmly as he could, for burning tears fell unbidden upon the paper.

"Sing, my children," said the dying musician, "our own Friedemann's favourite hymn."

They then with trembling voices began,

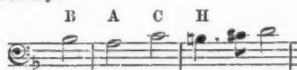
"Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen Sein."

"If we in deepest trouble lie,
In anxious thought with darkened eye,
All earthly aid is frail and weak,
In vain for help below we seek.
One better hope the soul retains,
God gives relief to all our pains;
For His great help we raise our cries,
His power alone our need supplies."

"Let that chorale stand as the last example in my legacy to musicians yet to come. My 'Art of Fugue' is finished," said Bach. "My sight grows dim. I can see no more."

He neither saw nor spoke more. He was seized with apoplexy and was deprived of the power of sight, of motion, and of speech. Ten days later his insensibility merged almost imperceptibly into "the sleep that knows no waking," till the Resurrection morn.

* The name of Bach was this subject, according to German musical notation, that is to say:—



In Germany the note B flat is called B from the resemblance to the old Gothic B rotundum, or round B; and B natural is called H from the resemblance to B quadratum, or square B; the signs used in England for the flat and the natural are modifications of these old Gothic letters.

THE TROUBLES OF A CHINAMAN.

BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XV.—A CONTRETEMPS.

EVERY obstacle to Kin-Fo's marriage with La-oo was now removed. It was true that the time allowed for Wang to fulfil his pledge had not yet expired; but the unfortunate philosopher had fallen a victim as the result of his mysterious flight, and further danger was not to be feared from him. The 25th of June, the very day on which at one time Kin-Fo had wished to end his existence, was fixed for the wedding.

La-oo had of course been informed of the various vicissitudes which her lover had experienced since he had sent her his refusal either to make her the participator of his poverty, or to run the risk of leaving her a widow, and she was well aware of the altered circumstances that had led him once more to come and claim her as his bride. She could not restrain her tears when she heard of Wang's death. She had known the philosopher and esteemed him, and he had moreover been her first confidant of her sentiments towards Kin-Fo.

"Poor Wang!" she said, "we shall miss him at our wedding."

"Yes, poor Wang!" repeated Kin-Fo; "but you

must remember," he added, "that he had sworn to kill me."

La-oo shook her pretty little head.

"No, no," she said, "he would never have done that. I believe he drowned himself in the Pei-Ho, for the very purpose of evading his promise."

Kin-Fo could not but own that her hypothesis was probable. He, too, regretted the faithful companion of his youth; his memory would be long in fading from either of their hearts.

It is almost needless to say that after the catastrophe on the bridge of Palikao, Biddulph's sensational paragraphs in the newspapers were discontinued, and the name of Kin-Fo sank into oblivion almost as speedily as it had risen into notoriety. The services of Craig and Fry were no longer in such urgent requisition. It is true that they were bound to defend the interests of the Centenarian until the 30th, the date of the expiration of the policy, but there was now no demand for the same measure of unremitting vigilance. Fear of attack from Wang had passed away, and there was no probability that Kin-Fo would lay violent hands on

himself; his desire now was to live as long as possible.

But Kin-Fo did not care to give them an abrupt dismissal. If their services had not been disinterested they had at least been conscientious, and he there-

Meantime he took temporary apartments in the Tien-Foo-Tang, or temple of Celestial Happiness, a very comfortable hotel and restaurant near the Tien-Men rampart, between the Chinese and Tartar towns. Craig and Fry were lodged in the same quarters.

Soon had returned to his duties, but although he was always grumbling, he took care, first of all, to assure himself that there was no phonograph at hand. The fate of old Mother Nan was a warning to him to be cautious.

Kin-Fo had the pleasure of meeting two of his Canton friends in Peking, the merchant Yin-Pang and Hooal the literate. They of course were invited to attend the approaching ceremony, as well as several of the dignitaries and merchants with whom Kin-Fo was acquainted in the capital.

Wang's apathetic, indifferent pupil seemed at last to have become truly happy; two months' trouble and botheration seemed at last to have made him appreciate his fortunate lot. The philosopher had been right, and it was a matter for regret that he was not present to witness the truth of the theory that he had advanced.

All the time that was at his disposal was spent by Kin-Fo with the young widow. She was never so happy as when he was by her side. She cared little for the presents which he lavished upon her from the richest stores in the city. Her thoughts were of him and him alone, and over and over again she would repeat to herself the wise maxims of the famous Pan-Hoei-Pan:—

"If a woman has a husband after her own heart, she has him for all her life."

"A woman should have an unbounded respect for the man whose name she bears."

"A woman should be like a shadow and an echo in the house."

"The husband is the wife's heaven."

Meantime the preparations for the wedding, which Kin-Fo wished to be very handsome, were advancing rapidly. Already the thirty pairs of embroidered slippers that are necessary for a Chinese lady's trousseau had arrived at La-oo's house, and her boudoir was crammed with confectionary, dried fruits, burnt almonds, barley sugar, syrup of aloes, oranges, ginger, and shaddocks, all in confusion with rich silks, jewels of wrought gold and precious stones, rings, bracelets, cases for the nails, bodkins for the hair, and all the charming nick-nacks that Peking jewelers so cunningly devised.

In this strange country, a young girl when she marries never has a dowry. She is literally purchased either by the husband himself, or by his relations. Although she may have no brothers, she cannot inherit any portion of her paternal fortune unless her father makes an express declaration in her favour. Such arrangements are always completed before the marriage, and are usually negotiated by agents called "Mei-jin."

The young *fiancée* is next presented to her husband's



THE BRIDAL PALANQUIN.

fore begged them to stay over his marriage festivities, an invitation which they were very pleased to accept.

"Marriage is a kind of suicide," was Fry's jesting remark to Craig.

"It is a surrender of one's life, at all events," was Craig's reply.

Old Nan was soon replaced in La-oo's household by a domestic of more agreeable disposition. Loo-ta-loo, an aunt of La-oo's, of mature age, had come to stay with her, and act a mother's part at the time of her marriage. She was the wife of a second-class mandarin of the fourth rank, with the blue button (formerly an Imperial reader and member of the Academy of the Han-lin), apparently possessing every quality for performing her office in a manner worthy of the occasion.

It was Kin-Fo's intention to leave Peking immediately after his marriage, as besides his objection to residing in the vicinity of the Imperial Court, he felt anxious to see his young wife properly installed as mistress of the sumptuous yamen at Shang-Hai.

parents. The husband himself she never sees until the wedding-day, when she is carried in a closed chair to his house. The key of the chair is handed to the bridegroom, who opens the door, and if the lady within pleases his taste, he holds out his hand to her; if not, he slams the door, and the engagement is all at an end, the girl's parents having the right to retain the purchase-money.

No preliminaries of this kind were necessary in Kin-Fo's case; he and his future wife were both free agents, and had no one to consult besides themselves. There were, however, other formalities which might not be neglected.

For three days before the wedding the inside of La-oo's house was kept brilliantly lighted throughout, and for three whole nights Loo-ta-loo, as the representative of the bride's family, had to abstain from sleep, to indicate the grief felt at parting from the fiancée. Had Kin-Fo's parents been living, his house would have been illuminated too, as a sign of mourning, for according to the Hao-Khieou-Chooen, "the marriage of a son ought to be regarded as an emblem of the death of the father."

There were moreover various astrological calculations not to be overlooked. The horoscopes were taken with due form, and foretold a perfect compatibility of temper between the affianced couple. The season of the year and the age of the moon were alike favourable, and it seemed as though no marriage could possibly take place under more propitious auspices.

The appointed day arrived, and everything was ready for the great event. In China there is no formal contract made in the presence of a bonze or lama, nor even before a civil magistrate, and it was arranged that the bride should be conducted with great pomp to the hotel of Celestial Happiness at eight o'clock in the evening.

At seven o'clock Kin-Fo, attended by Craig and Fry, waited to receive his friends at the door of his apartment. The invitations dispensed to them had been inscribed in microscopic characters on red paper, and ran thus:—

"Kin-Fo of Shang-Hai presents his humble respects to —, and humbly begs him to assist at the humble ceremony of his marriage."

The guests thus invited all arrived. They had come to do honour to the bridegroom, and to take part in the magnificent banquet prepared for the men, whilst the ladies would feast apart at a table specially reserved for them. Yin-Pang and Hooal the literate duly arrived amongst the rest.

There were several mandarins, who wore red balls as large as pigeon's eggs on the top of their official caps, indicating that they belonged to one of the three superior orders. Others wore only blue or white balls, marking them as of inferior ranks. The majority were civil officers of Chinese origin, as might be

expected of the friends of a man who was hostile to the Tartar race. All were gorgeously attired in brilliant robes, and formed a most striking assemblage.

As soon as they arrived, Kin-Fo conducted them to the reception-room, stopping twice on the way at doors which were opened by servants in gorgeous livery, and begging his guests to pass before him. His mode of addressing them was in the politest strain. He called them by their "noble names," inquired after their "noble health," and asked for information about their "noble families." Not even the most scrupulous observer of etiquette could have found the slightest flaw in his manners or deportment.

Craig and Fry watched his demeanour with surprise and admiration. They watched him also for another reason. The same idea had occurred to them both; namely, that Wang might not have perished, as they imagined, in the river. Were there not yet several hours to expire? Perhaps, even now, he might mingle with the wedding-guests and strike



THE IMPERIAL HERALD.

the fatal blow. Improbable as this was, it was not impossible, and Craig and Fry carefully scrutinised every one who entered. But the face they sought did not appear.

Meantime the bride was leaving her house in the Cha-Cooa Avenue, and was taking her place in a

closed palanquin. Although Kin-Fo had not chosen to adopt the mandarin costume, as according to ancient legislation he had the right of doing on the occasion of his marriage, La-oo's attire was in perfect conformity with the regulations of the highest society. Her robe was of crimson brocaded silk of the richest texture; over her face hung a transparent veil formed of the most minute pearls, which seemed to flow from the rich gold diadem that encircled her forehead; whilst her long black hair was adorned with jewels and artificial flowers. There was no fear that Kin-Fo would not find her charming enough for his taste when he should open the palanquin door.

The procession started. No doubt had the ceremony been that of a funeral the spectacle would have been still more elaborate, but as it was, it was sufficiently imposing to attract the attention of the bystanders as it passed down the Grand Avenue on its way to the Tien-Men rampart. La-oo's friends and companions followed the palanquin, carrying with great ceremony the numerous articles of the trousseau. In front was a band of musicians playing on copper instruments and gongs, and close round the palanquin marched a troop of attendants bearing torches and lanterns of every hue. The bride was carefully concealed from all inquiring eyes; etiquette compelled that the first view should be reserved for her husband-elect.

Surrounded by a noisy concourse of the populace, the *cortège* made its way shortly before eight o'clock to the hotel of Celestial Happiness. Kin-Fo was waiting at the decorated entrance, ready to open the door of the palanquin. He would then assist his bride to alight, and conduct her to a special apartment, where both together they would make their salutations to the four quarters of the heavens. Then they would proceed to the nuptial banquet, the bride first making four genuflections before her husband, he in his turn making two to her. This done, they would spill two or three drops of wine as a libation, and would offer an oblation of food to the interceding spirits, and as a final consecration to their union, a goblet of wine would be handed to each; they would severally drink half the contents, and pouring what remained into one cup, would proceed to empty it by drinking in turns.

The bride had arrived. Kin-Fo stepped forward. The master of the ceremonies handed him a key, with which he unlocked the door of the palanquin. He held out his hand; La-oo, trembling and beautiful, descended lightly, and passed through the assembled visitors, who saluted her respectfully by raising their hands to their breasts. As the bride entered the hotel a signal was given, and instantly a number of illuminated kites in the form of dragons, phoenixes, and other emblems of marriage, rose into the air; flying pigeons, with a little musical apparatus attached to their tails, filled the space overhead with harmonious sounds, whilst hundreds of sky-rockets shot up and descended in a golden shower.

Suddenly a distant noise was heard upon the ramparts. Mingled with the murmur of voices were heard the tones of a trumpet's blast. The noise ceased, then began again. This time the sounds were nearer; it was evident they were approaching the very street where the bridal *cortège* had arrived. Kin-Fo paused and listened; his friends stood waiting to receive the bride. Gradually the commotion reached the street; the trumpets were being blown more vigorously than ever.

"What can it be?" Kin-Fo exclaimed.

La-oo turned pale; a presentiment of the cause of the uproar made her heart beat fast. All at once the mob rushed down the street. In the midst was a herald wearing the Imperial uniform, and escorted by a detachment of ti-paos. Silence fell upon the multitude as he proclaimed, in sonorous tones, "The Empress Dowager is dead!"

"An interdiction! an interdiction!"

Kin-Fo uttered an exclamation of rage and disappointment. Only too well he knew what an interdiction meant. It meant that during the court-mourning, which, commencing from that moment, would last for a period to be fixed by law, no subject would be allowed to have his head shaved, no public festivities might be held, no theatrical representations might be given, no courts of justice might be open, and, worst of all, no marriages might be celebrated!

La-oo, though downcast, was not disconcerted. Taking Kin-Fo's hand, she pressed it gently, and in a voice that strove to conceal her emotion, she said, bravely, "We must wait a little longer."

And so the palanquin departed, bearing the fair young bride back to her home in the Cha-Cooa Avenue. The festivities were suspended, the tables cleared, the orchestra dismissed, and the guests, after hearty condolences with the disconsolate bridegroom, took their departure.

Kin-Fo, with only Craig and Fry, was left in the deserted apartment of the hotel of Celestial Happiness, a name of bitter sarcasm to him now. An evil fate seemed still to be pursuing him. He dared not run the risk of infringing the Imperial edict, and the interdiction might be prolonged at the Emperor's pleasure to an indefinite period. Here, indeed, was an occasion when he had need of all the precepts of philosophy instilled into him in his early days.

An hour later a servant entered bearing a letter, which, he said, had just been delivered by a messenger. Kin-Fo exclaimed with surprise. He recognised the handwriting; it was Wang's own.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am yet alive, but by the time you receive this I shall be dead. I die because I have not courage to perform my contract; but be content, I have provided for your wishes to be carried out. Lao-Shen, a Tai-ping, and a former comrade of my own, has your letter. He has hands and heart that will not flinch. He will do the deed. To him I have bequeathed the sum of money which would fall to me at your death.

"Farewell, dear friend; my death will not long precede your own! Again, farewell!

"Yours ever,

"WANG."

NEW CALEDONIA.

NEW CALEDONIA, the existence of which was thought very probable by Bougainville in 1768, was discovered by Captain Cook on the 4th of September, 1774. It is one of the principal islands of the Melanesian group in the South Pacific. Its length is about 180 miles, and its breadth about 36. The superficial area is about three times the extent of Corsica, one and a half that of Sicily, and forty times that of the Department of the Seine.

This island possesses as dependencies some smaller

islands, and chiefly the Isle of Pines, and a group called the Loyalty Islands.

In 1793 Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, having been sent to search for La Pérouse, landed on its shores. Dumont d'Urville only sailed round the island in 1826, but did not land to survey the interior. It was not before 1843 that they began in France to think much of these distant possessions. But whilst France thought only of sending over in the *Bucephalus* five Catholic missionaries, the Australian coasters were seeking on these coasts cargoes of tortoise-shells, sea dogs, and sandal-wood, which they sold to the Chinese for weight of gold.

At this period Australia was one of England's most considerable colonies. In 1788 Botany Bay contained but 760 transported criminals, but in 1824 the English Government provided extensive means for emigration. It refused shelter and aid to every man of above fifty years of age and to women of above forty-five, but to all others, without distinction of sex or number, it furnished implements for labour, seed, eighteen months' provisions, fifty acres of land, and for all this required in return but one obligation—viz., labour. Thus in 1835 Australia counted eighty-five thousand inhabitants, of whom twenty thousand were convicts and sixty-five thousand were free coloured people that had come there from all countries.

It was not till the discovery of the gold mines in Australia, and the vast movement that resulted from it, that the French Government found out the importance of having an oceanic colony. In 1851 the commander of the *Alcimedé*, M. d'Harcourt, landed on the coast of New Caledonia, but this expedition had a fatal result. Two officers and thirteen sailors conducting an armed embarkation were surprised and devoured by the natives. A new expedition was prepared. Rear-Admiral Febvrier-Despointes took possession of New Caledonia in the name of France, and the annexation was confirmed by a decree of 14th February, 1854.

The commencement of colonising is always extremely arduous, and the French soldiers and colonists had very much to endure. The first care of the governor, M. Tardy de Montravel, in 1856, was to choose a central part for the capital, which became at the same time a military position and a safe port. He founded Nouméa, called at first French Port. It is situated on the seacoast, at the foot of a sterile mountain, and nearly in the middle of an immense road, formed by the peninsula of Ducos on the north, and is sheltered from the sea on the west and on the south by the island of Nou, which is become the dépôt of the emigrants.

At present Nouméa is a small town containing about four hundred houses, two long streets parallel to the coast, and three boulevards, in which are the house of the governor, the treasury, the naval magazine, the hospital, the artillery barracks and printing-offices, and other buildings.

But the Canaques did not let these works be carried on without opposition. They roved all night around the entrenchments, and more than once the wearied soldiers paid with their lives for moments of rest or of carelessness. It was necessary to reduce these and other tribes to submission, which was not effected until 1868, after Gondou, one of their most powerful chiefs, had been taken prisoner and put to death.

As to the means of colonising, it was in 1864 that the French Government resolved to employ its con-

victs for this purpose, under the name of transport workmen. Twenty vessels were fitted out, destined for the accommodation of a hundred transports each, containing workshops, cow-houses, model farms, etc. The price of land per acre was fixed at ten francs. To every emigrant was given a bonus of a hundred and fifty francs, payable in land. A premium was promised to the first colonist that established a sugar-house of sufficient importance. Some considerable results were thus effected, although very inferior to those which at the same time England was obtaining in Australia. Rice-fields covered the fertile plains of Canala. M. Lepout, at Houagape, formed a coffee plantation. At Toua, Dinette, and other places, discharged soldiers possessed in 1870 thirty head of cattle, grazing around stone houses; also a hundred pigs within their enclosure, and six hundred coffee-trees on the neighbouring hills, thus showing what labour and perseverance could effect.

On the other hand must be mentioned the many failures owing to administrative neglect. The following is one related by M. Patouillet. Water fit for drinking was wanting at Nouméa. Some English engineers had proposed, for the sum of 60,000 fr., and the assistance of the convicts, to bring water from Pont des Français by a canal. The governor, in 1868, when a dearth, during which water brought by cattle cost at Nouméa as much as five francs a barrel, instead of accepting the offers of the Englishmen, chose to buy at Sydney two large sets of distilling apparatus, which, having cost the Government the enormous sum of 60,000 fr., furnished water scarcely sufficient for the daily requirements of the population, and occasioned, without reckoning repairs, an annual expense for keeping and heating at least 30,000 fr.

Since 1871 great progress has been made. M. de la Richerie, as the first act of his administration, granted to the colonists the privilege of nominating a municipal board of three members, these being better fitted to know and maintain their true interests than a body of marine or military officers, here to-day and there to-morrow.

They also talk of establishing a consul-general, as there is in all important colonies. Then it will be easy to bind more intimately New Caledonia to France by the election of a deputy. Moreover, commerce has made undoubted development. Mines of coal, of iron, and of gold have been discovered; extensive works are in progress of execution.

From time to time the authorities have had much trouble with the natives, and every precaution had to be taken against surprise. The use of the island as a place of detention for political prisoners has added to this difficulty. The escape of some of the Communists is an incident which many will remember. By disarming the people and increasing the garrison insurrection is now less considered, but the administration of the island is not successful in a financial point of view. The French are not good colonists, but they are ambitious of having foreign settlements—for glory, if not for wealth. The recent extension of commercial enterprise among the Germans has given new impetus to French colonial plans.

The latest account of New Caledonia is from a notable French politician in a work which is now exciting much attention in Paris. A notice of the book appears in the "Daily News," prefixed to a leading article on his political career. "M. Henri Rochefort, the most conspicuous Frenchman who

remains in exile under the Third Republic, relates his experiences as a political convict in New Caledonia. It appears indeed under the form of a romance, entitled the 'Evadé,' but there are many indications that it is a personal record of some of the moving adventures which happened to himself while actually detained at Nouméa. He gives an account, half ludicrous, half melancholy, of the penal settlement to which he was sent, and every page of his narrative is alive with that sportive and astonishing humour which has made him so redoubtable an opponent and so amusing a writer. M. Rochefort assures his readers that the geographical form of New Caledonia is no more poetic than that of a boot-leg, to which it has a remarkable likeness. He observes that Captain Cook, taking a true British commercial view of his discovery, abandoned it to France on account of its sterility, for that, being steadfastly determined to persevere in its resemblance to the boot-leg he has already mentioned, it produces no more than a morsel of leather. The natives devour a sort of green clay to assuage the pangs of hunger and support their stomachs against the void of utter emptiness which is abhorred by nature. They are nourished, however, when they can really get food, upon lizards, spiders of a hairy sort, and a kind of cockchafer, all of which they eat alive with an evident sense of relish. The climate of the country is such that whenever Nouméa is not a cistern it becomes an oven. The houses are no more substantial than though they were made of packing-cases, and even the official building, to which the pompous name of 'The Governor's Palace' is given, can only be compared to a Swiss chalet. The European population is composed of the worst sweepings of society—political and financial riff-raff, dead-beats from Monaco, swindlers from the Stock Exchange, runaway lads who have brought disgrace on their families, and ladies of no character. These persons naturally form a strong contrast to the ideal patriots who figure in M. Rochefort's novel."

Varieties.

WITHIN the past five years the acreage of cereals in the United States has increased from 74,000,000 to 95,000,000.

ANECDOTES OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE.—The bishop was in the habit of telling the two following anecdotes respecting the early years of his incumbency at Brightstone:—On his first visit to the parish after receiving the offer of the living, the principal farmer asked him, "Be you going to keep the meadow (a small one on the glebe) in your own hands?" "Why?" asked Mr. S. Wilberforce. "Well, parson, you see, when late rector had it he used to cut his grass when I cut mine, and his being only a little piece, in course he gets his up while most of mine be lying about—and then sure enough the very next Sunday he claps on the prayer for rain—so if you don't mind I'd like to rent that meadow from you." It is needless to add that the good man was re-assured. The second story—a great favourite of the bishop's—was somewhat different, and used to be adduced by him as an example, not merely of the character of his parishioners, but of the need of great explicitness in preaching. Brightstone had a bad name alike for wrecking and for smuggling, so before long Mr. S. Wilberforce took occasion to preach a sermon specially against the latter, and his text was the verse, "Render unto all their dues: Custom to whom custom," etc. The next morning, being half afraid that he might have given some offence, he asked a friend who was staying with him to go round the parish and learn how the sermon had been regarded.

To the astonishment of both, the villagers greatly approved the sermon, with the one exception, that while the rector had said nothing but what he ought to say, he didn't himself practise what he preached. "You don't say so," said the cautious inquirer; "what does the rector do that is wrong?" "Why, sir," was the reply, "you see, he told us we ought to give custom to whom custom was due, and yet he doesn't deal in the village, but buys his things at Newport."—*Life of the Right Rev. Samuel Wilberforce, D.D., etc.* By A. R. A. Howell, M.A., etc.

PLURAL OF NAMES ENDING WITH S.—We never understood how the controversy, carried on in the papers, as to nouns in S was settled. The last letter in the "Times" was pretty dogmatic, but we do not find the rule kept even in the "Times." Here is the letter, entitled, "A common error:—" "Most of our school grammars give some such rule as this:—'Where the singular ends in es, the apostrophe only is added.' Now, an exception has been thus raised to the dignity of a rule, and hence the large families of Collins, Davis, Ellis, and Jones are utterly at a loss how to spell their own names in the possessive case. 'Collins' publications,' 'Miss Jones' entertainment,' 'the Miss Davis's,' 'St. James' Church,' are errors of constant occurrence. From Addison to Macaulay, our best writers add the s, as Socrates's, Charles's, James's, except in verse. Possibly the following rule, if taught at our schools and practised by our writers, printers, and painters, would remedy the evil:—'Nouns in s are declined thus:—Singular—nominative, Jones; possessive, Jones's; plural—nominative, Joneses; possessive, Joneses's.'"

DOMESTIC TELEGRAPHS.—In England we are slow to adopt novelties, even when there is no doubt as to their utility. A striking instance of this tardiness is the small use made of the electric telegraph compared with its use in the United States. The number of postal telegrams is limited by the high rate and insufficient or uncertain service. As to private telegraphs, the following letter to the "Times," from the managing director of the Exchange Telegraph Company, is worthy of attention: "Sir,—In your leading article on the subject of Post-office Administration you have the following statement: 'In the United States, where enterprise has full play, the telegraph facilitates and expedites nearly every transaction of life. A gentleman sitting in his own room in New York, or in any other great Transatlantic city, has only to touch a telegraph bell in order to have a messenger sent to him from the office with which he is connected—a messenger who will not only convey a telegram for transmission, but who will promptly execute any commission requiring intelligence and despatch. Such messengers are employed to make purchases, to engage places at entertainments, to fetch conveyances, and so forth; and the effect of the arrangement is to place a trusty man-servant at the disposition of the inmates of every house into which the wires are carried. The telegraphic connections for giving alarm in case of fire are also very elaborate and complete; and these are only specimens of the multifarious applications which the system has received.' It is but fair to remark that if these privileges are not enjoyed in England it is not the fault of the department, as a licence was granted to the Exchange Telegraph Company seven years ago to introduce this identical system of telegraphy, as initiated in the States by the American District Telegraph Company, and that some thousands have since been spent in a vain endeavour to convince householders that for a few pounds per annum they can be protected from thieves and fire and obtain the use of messengers, cabs, etc., at call; and it is but due to the department to add that under this licence the principal portions of the metropolis and some of the chief provincial towns have been canvassed for subscribers without the slightest encouragement from the public, and that, except by a couple of hundred users of it, for special purposes in the City, the system has not been appreciated."

A LARGE YIELD OF WHEAT.—A short time ago General John Gibbon, of St. Paul, made the assertion that 100 bushels of wheat had been raised on an acre of ground in the territory of Montana. The statement having been received with incredulity, he wrote to the president of the First National Bank in Helena for proof. In reply, he received the certificate of the president and secretary of the Territorial Fair Association that one James L. Ray, of Lewis and Clark county, was awarded first premium for the best acre of wheat, being 102 bushels to the acre. This is believed to be the largest yield of wheat on record.—*Indianapolis Journal.*